



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group Participants to Reduce the Risk of Whale Entanglements in CA Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear

Updated April 2019

The California Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group (Working Group) is seeking nominations for the following representatives to serve on the Working Group, beginning in June 2019:

- Commercial Dungeness crab permitholders from Morro Bay/Port San Luis, Santa Cruz, Eureka, & Trinidad
- California Dungeness crab permitholder residing in Oregon or Washington
- Commercial Dungeness crab processor based in California

In addition to the above, a designated representative from the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations (PCFFA) will join the Working Group at the request of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Director and Marine Region Manager.

Background and Charge of the Working Group

The Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group (Working Group) was convened in April 2015 by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), in partnership with the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), as a result of increasing trends in large whale entanglements.

The Working Group supports thriving whale and sea turtle populations along the West Coast and a thriving and profitable Dungeness crab fishery¹. The Working Group's role is to develop strategies to reduce the risk of whale entanglements in California Dungeness crab fishing gear. In cooperation with a facilitation team (Strategic Earth Consulting) and staff from the CDFW, NMFS, OPC, and the United States Coast Guard (USCG), the Working Group will:

- Provide guidance and make recommendations to the state of California (CDFW, OPC, Fish and Game Commission, Legislature), federal agencies (NMFS, USCG), and the Dungeness crab fishing industry, including the Dungeness Crab Task Force (DCTF), regarding how to avoid/minimize entanglements.
 - Identify changes to fishing activity that can reduce entanglement risk; establish priorities for addressing entanglements; share information with other entities seeking to address entanglements in California; as well as develop recommendations regarding funding priorities, management changes, and other actions to further reduce entanglement risk.
- Continue using the [Risk Assessment and Mitigation Program](#) (RAMP) to assess circumstances where entanglement risk may be elevated and, as needed, identify possible management measures for the CDFW's Director's consideration, as required by [Fish and Game Code \(FGC\) § 8276.1](#);
- Support CDFW's efforts to develop regulations that formalize the RAMP program, including criteria and protocols to evaluate and respond to the potential risk of marine life entanglement, by November 1, 2020, as required by FGC § 8276.1; and
- Provide input to CDFW regarding the development of a draft Habitat Conservation Plan addressing protected species interactions (i.e. species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act) with Dungeness crab fishing gear.

¹ Note: All references to the Dungeness crab fishery/industry considers both recreational and commercial fishing communities.

The Working Group's charge is to work on the above tasks; it is not to debate the virtues of whether efforts should be made by the Dungeness crab industry to reduce the potential for whale entanglements.

Working Group Composition

Currently, the Working Group is comprised of recreational and commercial fishing industry representatives, state and federal agencies, representatives from the whale disentanglement network, and nongovernmental organizations. In addition to Working Group participants, select individuals with additional expertise or perspective beyond Working Group participants are invited to inform Working Group discussions as Working Group Advisors (e.g., legislative or agency staff, scientific experts, fishing gear manufacturer/distributor, data analysts, etc.). Advisors help inform the Working Group recommendations, but will ultimately not be included in the decision making needed to make a recommendation (see additional details in the Working Group Charter).

Working Group Selection Criteria

The selection of the Working Group and its Advisors is at the discretion of the CDFW Marine Region Manager. In appointing Working Group participants, the Region Manager may consider professional expertise or experience, diversity of perspectives, geographic location, willingness to express fundamental interests as opposed to fixed positions, ability and willingness to share Working Group updates with peers, willingness to convey the interests of one or more groups and to integrate diverse interests, capacity to work with diverse viewpoints, and ability to work constructively and collaboratively. The Region Manager will also consider Bagley Keene constraints of DCTF members. All Working Group participants must have an active email address and phone number.

Meeting Schedule and Commitment

The Working Group is anticipated to meet in-person two to three times per year in one to two-day plenary meetings, and will also participate in approximately ten RAMP conference calls per year, depending on RAMP operations. Working Group participants are encouraged to participate in one or more Project Teams focused on initiatives such as gear innovations, aerial surveys, and electronic data collection. Additional calls will be held on an as-needed basis to address elevated entanglement risk, track progress and deliverables, and support internal Working Group coordination.

The facilitation team attempts to convene in-person meetings in central locations; past meetings have generally been held in Santa Rosa. Limited travel reimbursement will be available for Working Group participants based on expressed need, distance traveled, etc.

Working Group participants are expected to prepare for all meetings, including reading and developing materials in advance of meetings. Working Group participants are expected to actively engage between meetings, including responding to information requests and providing feedback on documents circulated via email and maintain an open line of communication with the facilitation team, agencies, and other Working Group participants between meetings. Working Group participants, with support from state agencies, are strongly encouraged to share information with constituent groups and solicit feedback and insights on topics currently being discussed by the Working Group. CDFW is responsible for disseminating information to the fleet regarding changes to the fishery or potential closures. Interested individuals are asked to commit to participating on the Working Group for 2-3 years.

Contact

Additional information about the Working Group's activities including meeting summaries, reports, etc. is available at <http://www.opc.ca.gov/whale-entanglement-working-group/>. **For those interested in participating in the Working Group or to provide nominations, please contact info@cawhalegroup.com by May 15, 2019.** Selection of new Working Group participants will be made on or before the week of June 10, 2019.